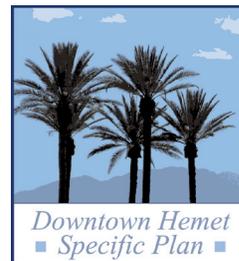


CHAPTER 7 Streetscape and Open Space



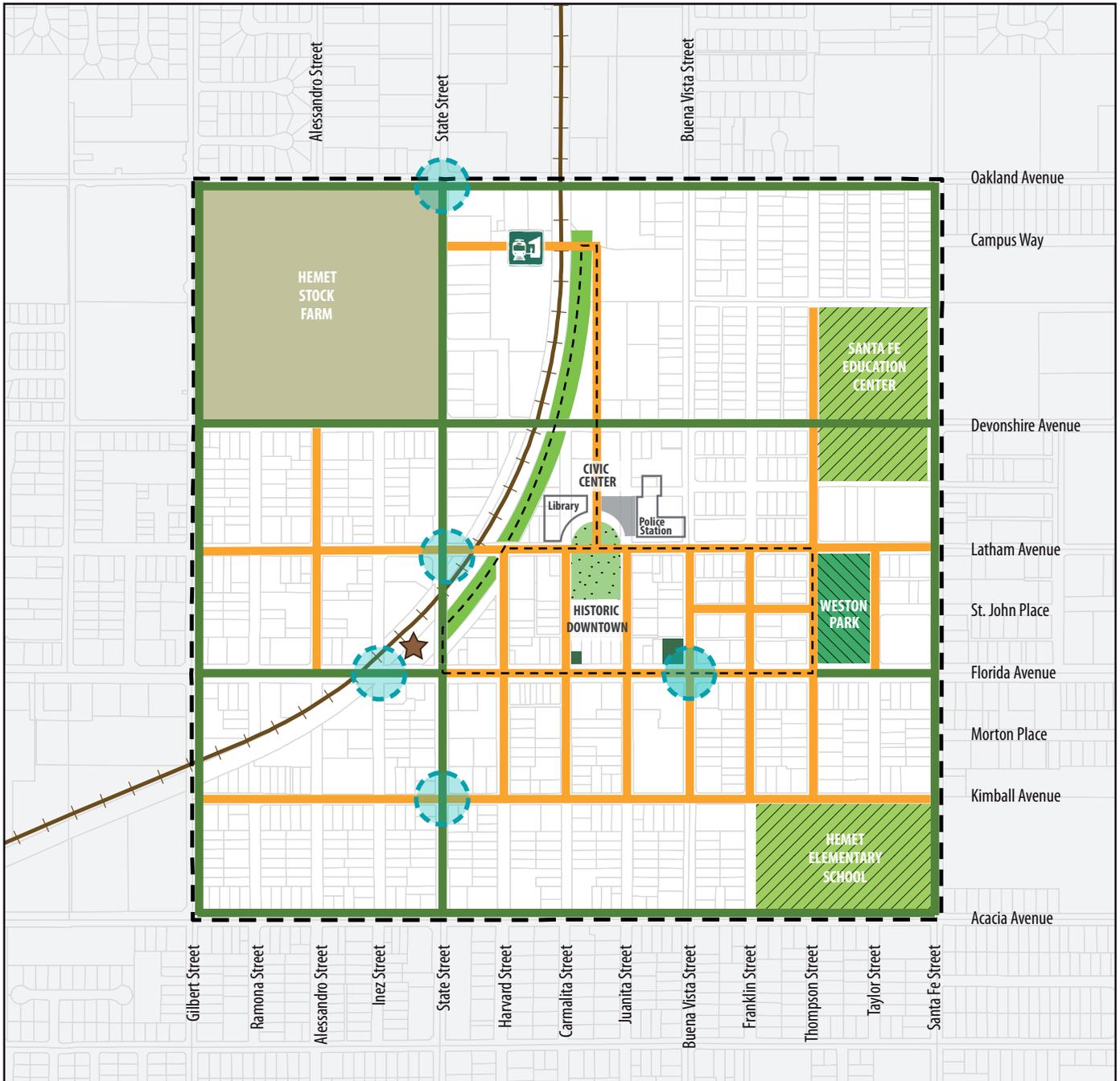
A. Introduction

This chapter presents streetscape and open space design concepts for the Downtown Hemet Specific Plan area. The overall goal is to enhance and make better use of the various open spaces and parks within the Downtown, and provide improved linkages and streetscape improvements that help create identity for Downtown and foster pedestrian activity. The recommended public realm improvements will enhance outdoor recreation, connectivity and pedestrian movement throughout Downtown Hemet.

B. Streetscape Improvements

Streetscape improvements are meant to enhance and unify the visual and spatial experience of the driver, pedestrian, and bicyclist, and help provide key linkages between activity nodes, open spaces and neighborhoods in Downtown Hemet. The streetscape environment gives the user a sense of direction and place within the Downtown.

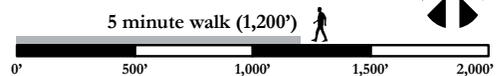
The recommended streetscape improvements for key streets in the Downtown consist of an interrelated palette of street trees, median improvements, street furniture, street lighting, landscaping, and gateway features that help create a cohesive streetscape environment. The improved streetscapes will also provide linkages between the parks and open spaces in the Downtown, which are described subsequently in this chapter. These elements are illustrated in Figure 7-1 and described in more detail in the following sections.



-  Specific Plan Boundary
-  Rail Right-of-Way/ Future Transit Line
-  Future Transit Mobility Hub (approximate location)
-  Hemet Museum/ Historic Santa Fe Depot
-  Gateways into Historic Downtown
-  Vehicular-Scale Streets
-  Pedestrian-Scaled Streets / Pedestrian Linkages
-  Civic Plaza
-  Weston Park
-  School Open Space
-  Pocket Parks
-  Linear Park (from Hemet Museum to Future Transit Station)
-  Ramona Loop
-  Hemet Stock Farm
-  Site of Future City Hall

FIGURE 7-1
Streetscape and Open Space Concept

DOWNTOWN HEMET SPECIFIC PLAN



1. Street Trees

Downtown Hemet currently has an inconsistent palette and pattern of street trees. The dominant street tree species found in the Downtown are Camphor, Golden Rain, Magnolia, and Mexican Fan Palm. Except for a few street segments with a consistent stand of trees, a mix of street tree species can be found. In addition, some streets have very sparse street trees and other no street trees at all. This lack of continuity and uniformity contributes to the inconsistent and fragmented character of the Downtown.

Planting new street trees per a consistent street tree palette will help unify the streetscape environment in the Downtown. A uniform pattern of street trees will also increase connectivity and sense of cohesion on a pedestrian and auto-oriented scale, as well as offer a pleasant sidewalk experience. In addition, new street trees will provide shade, add seasonal color, define the street edge, and add to the urban forest. Canopy trees will also lower overall temperatures on sidewalks and roadways by shading, as well as capture and treat storm water before it drains into the local watershed.

The street trees for the major streets in Downtown Hemet have been selected to accommodate different needs on each street, but remain a cohesive palette through color, form, texture and water requirements. A distinct tree palette is selected for the pedestrian oriented streets in the historic Downtown core, which will be unified through fall color and spring blooms. The colors found in the historic core will extend onto Latham Avenue's street tree selection, unifying the Civic Center with the Downtown core. The trees recommended for other key streets in the Downtown were selected to compliment the historic Downtown core and are large and evergreen in nature with grand forms. Existing street trees were considered and selected for some streets to maintain a cohesive palette. Other streets in the Downtown that are not specifically identified in this Specific Plan shall follow the City's Street Tree Master Plan.

Table 7-1 lists the street tree designations and their characteristics for the major streets within the Specific Plan area, which are illustrated on the following pages. Street tree spacing will be determined by City of Hemet Department of Public Works and will need to consider field conditions including mature canopy size (identified in Table 7-1), the available area for planting along the sidewalks and/or parkways, location of existing trees to retain, driveway aprons, street lights, utilities, and presence or absence of overhead power lines on a block-by-block basis.

In addition to the street trees, a complimentary palette of drought-tolerant and low maintenance groundcovers and shrubs is recommended for the sidewalks bulbouts and raised median along Florida Avenue. Table 7-2 identifies the proposed shrub and groundcover palette.

Table 7-1: Street Tree Designations for Key Streets

Common Name	Botanical Name	Type	Height	Canopy	Bloom	Water Usage	Growth Rate
Florida Avenue							
Thornless Chilean Mesquite	<i>Prosopis chilensis</i>	Evergreen	up to 30'	up to 30'	none	low	moderate
California Fan Palm	<i>Washingtonia filifera</i>	Palm	up to 40'	10-15'	none	low	fast
Mexican Fan Palm	<i>Washingtonia robusta</i>	Palm	50-60	10-15'	Summer	low	fast
Florida Avenue (Median)							
Desert Museum Palo Verde	<i>Parkinsonia x "Desert Museum"</i>	Deciduous	25'	20'	Spring	low	fast
Buena Vista Street							
Idaho Locust	<i>Robinia x amnigua 'Idahoensis'</i>	Evergreen	35-40'	20-30'	Spring, Summer	low	fast
Harvard Street							
Pink Trumpet Tree	<i>Tabebuia impetiginosa</i>	Deciduous	25-30'	25-30'	Spring	low	fast
Carmalita Street, Juanita Street							
Thornless Honey Locust	<i>Gleditsia triacanthos 'inermis'</i>	Deciduous	40'	40'	none	low	fast
Devonshire Avenue							
Peppermint Willow	<i>Agonis flexuosa</i>	Evergreen	25-40'	15-25'	Spring	medium	fast
Acacia Avenue							
Drake's Chinese Elm	<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i>	Evergreen	30-35'	40-45'	none	medium	fast
Latham Avenue							
London Planetree	<i>Platanus x acerifolia</i>	Deciduous	40-80'	30-40'	none	medium	fast
State Street, Gilbert Street							
Modesto Ash	<i>Fraxinus velutina 'Modesto'</i>	Deciduous	40-50'	40-50'	none	low	fast

Note: The minimum tree grate dimensions for all selected trees is 5 by 5 feet.

Table 7-2: Shrub and Groundcover Palette

Common Name	Botanical Name	Common Name	Botanical Name
Shrubs		Groundcovers	
Black Rose Aeonium	<i>Aeonium 'Zwartkopft'</i>	Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium 'moonshine'</i>
Coral Aloe	<i>Aloe striata</i>	Blue Chalk Sticks	<i>Senecio mandraliscae</i>
Fox Tail Agave	<i>Agave attenuata</i>	Spreading Sunshine Lantana	<i>Lantana x 'Monine'</i>
Blue Glow Agave	<i>Agave 'Blue Glow'</i>	Irene Rosemary	<i>Rosemary 'Irene'</i>
Fort Night Lily	<i>Dietes Bicolor</i>	Trailing Gazania	<i>Gazania rigens leucolaena</i>
Incienso	<i>Encelia farinosa</i>		
Dwarf Mat Rush	<i>Lomandra 'Breeze'</i>		
Tender Fountain Grass	<i>Pennesetum setaceum</i>		
Jerusalem Sage	<i>Phlomis lanata</i>		
Pink Muhly	<i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i>		

2. Street Tree Recommendations

Florida Avenue: Florida Avenue is a main thoroughfare in Downtown Hemet and is currently lined with Mexican Fan Palms. California Fan Palm and Thornless Chilean Mesquite are proposed to accompany the existing Mexican Fan Palms. The California Fan Palm was selected because of its moderate height and similar form to the Mexican Fan Palm.

The Thornless Chilean Mesquite tree will alternate on Florida Avenue with both proposed and existing palm trees, providing a comfortable pedestrian scale. The Thornless Chilean Mesquite has a lacy, open canopy that will allow for retail signage to remain visible. The varying height between the Thornless Chilean Mesquite, California Fan Palm, and Mexican Fan palm will satisfy both the pedestrian and vehicular experience along Florida Avenue. Pedestrians will be pleasantly shaded underneath the canopy of the Thornless Chilean Mesquite tree as they are strolling along Florida Avenue, while the Palm trees visually link the Hemet skyline as motorists drive through.

The proposed median tree on Florida Avenue is the Desert Museum Palo Verde, which provides year round interest with its spring bloom and sculptural forms.



California Fan Palm, *Washingtonia filifera*



Mexican Fan Palm, *Washingtonia robusta*



Thornless Chilean Mesquite, *Prosopis chilensis*



Desert Museum Palo Verde, *Parkinsonia x "Desert Museum"* (median)

◀ Recommended street tree palette for Florida Avenue.

Buena Vista Street: The proposed street tree for Buena Vista Street is the Idaho Locust. This tree has been selected to complement the existing Locust trees on Buena Vista Street. The spring bloom of pink flowers will provide seasonal interest.

Harvard Street: The proposed street tree for Harvard Street, between Latham Avenue and Kimball Avenue, is the Pink Trumpet Tree. This tree was selected to complement the Idaho Locust on Buena Vista Street because of its similar pink blooms. The pink spring foliage along Harvard Street and Buena Vista Street will create “book ends” for the historic Downtown core.

Carmalita Street and Juanita Street: The proposed street tree for both Carmalita Street and Juanita Street, between Latham Avenue and Kimball Avenue, is the Thornless Honey Locust. This tree will provide a yellow fall color “necklace” in the historic Downtown core, flanking the east and west sides of the proposed Civic Plaza. This will also help unify the core, providing yellow flower and fall color at Florida Avenue, Carmalita Street and Juanita Street.

Latham Avenue: The proposed street tree for Latham Avenue is London Plane tree. The London Plane tree was selected because of its large, stately form that will create a grand alley down Latham Avenue, which fronts the Civic Center.

Devonshire Avenue: The proposed street tree for Devonshire is Peppermint Willow. Since Devonshire intersects the entrance of the Hemet Stock Farm’s alley of California Pepper Trees, the Peppermint Willow was selected for its complimentary weeping form and similar color/texture. The California Pepper was not selected because it is an invasive species.

Acacia Avenue: The proposed street tree for Acacia Avenue is Drake’s Chinese Elm. With its lacy canopy and shedding bark, the Chinese elm will provide year round interest for both pedestrians and drivers.

State Street and Gilbert Street: The proposed street tree for State Street and Gilbert Street is Modesto Ash. As there are existing Modesto Ash trees on State Street, the species will continue throughout State Street, and along Gilbert Street for continuity.



Idaho Locust, *Robinia ambigua 'idahoensis'*



Pink Trumpet Tree, *Tabebuia impetiginosa*



London Plane Tree, *Platanus x acerifolia*



Thornless Honey Locust, *Glenditsia triacanthos*



Drake's Chinese Elm, *Ulmus parvifolia 'Drake'*



Peppermint Willow, *Agonis Flexuosa*



Modesto Ash, *Fraxinus velutina 'Modesto'*

Recommended street trees for Buena Vista Street, Harvard Street, Carmalita Street, Juanita Street, Latham Avenue, Devonshire Avenue, Acacia Avenue, State Street, and Gilbert Street.

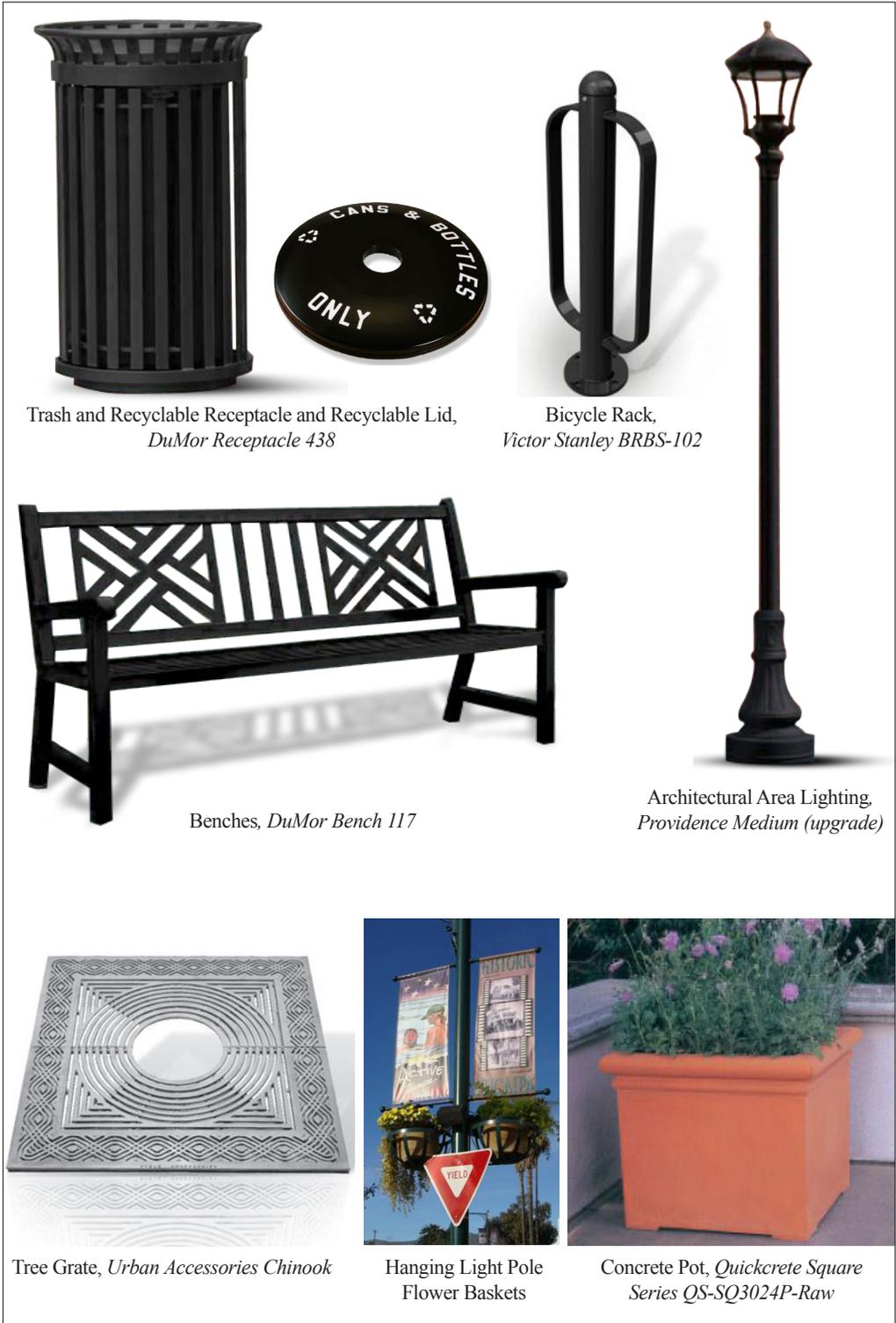
3. Street Furniture

The Specific Plan recommends a street furniture palette as illustrated in this section. The selected palette brings comfort, human scale and design expression to the streetscape, while also complementing the surrounding architecture. The palette is also durable and easy to maintain.

The street furniture selections allude to the historic architecture and agriculture activity of Hemet. Each selected element evokes a timeless style while creating a visual connection within the downtown core through consistent colors, finishes, and styles. The graphic diagonals of the selected bench emulate Hemet's historic stock farm entrance, uniting the celebrated architectural element with the downtown core. The accompanying pieces (trash receptacle, tree grate, planter, and bicycle racks) complement the bench with a unified style.

The light fixture by Architectural Area Lighting will replace the existing pedestrian-scaled lights, which were of concern to the community because they do not emit sufficient light. This replacement will promote safety and enhance the nighttime pedestrian experience. The single lantern fixture will also be equipped with horizontal poles enabling the city to hang flower baskets, banners and other seasonal decorations. The street furniture elements together will create “living rooms” within the historic Downtown core where local residents can connect with one another and give pedestrians the opportunity to stop and relax.

Street furniture locations will be determined by City of Hemet Department of Public Works and will need to consider field conditions. At a minimum, street furniture is recommended in sidewalks bulb-outs, at major intersections, and at intervals along pedestrian streets in the historic Downtown core. Planters are recommended in front of retail shops in the historic Downtown core.



Trash and Recyclable Receptacle and Recyclable Lid, DuMor Receptacle 438

Bicycle Rack, Victor Stanley BRBS-102

Benches, DuMor Bench 117

Architectural Area Lighting, Providence Medium (upgrade)

A consistent palette of street furniture will help unify the Downtown. The street furniture selections allude to the historic architecture and agriculture activity of Hemet.



Tree Grate, Urban Accessories Chinook



Hanging Light Pole Flower Baskets



Concrete Pot, Quickcrete Square Series QS-SQ3024P-Raw

4. Wayfinding and Gateways

The Specific Plan recommends the design and installation of a signage and wayfinding system in the Specific Plan area. Wayfinding helps people orient themselves in physical space and navigate from place to place through effective signage, markers, and/or monuments. It is how people choose a path within the built environment. The wayfinding system should direct motorists and pedestrians to the important destinations in and around the Specific Plan area such as the historic Downtown core, Weston Park, Hemet Stock Farm, Civic Center, and future transit mobility hub, as well as other public facilities and public parking.

In addition, there are five recommended locations for gateway monuments announcing entry into the historic Downtown core (Figure 7-1). Gateways note the entry points of distinct environments and clearly communicate identity for an area. The intersections of Florida Avenue with Inez Street and Buena Vista Street provide western and eastern “book ends” to the historic core, and gateway monuments could be located in the Florida Avenue median. In addition, the City owns a small property adjacent to the rail line on the southeast corner of State Street and Latham Avenue. State Street is a major north-south street providing regional connectivity, and Latham Avenue connects to the Civic Center. This small city-owned parcel presents the opportunity for interesting and memorable gateway signage that complements the monuments on Florida Avenue. Gateways are also proposed along State Street at Oakland Avenue and Kimball Avenue, announcing entry in to Downtown.



A wayfinding system should be designed for Downtown Hemet to direct motorists and pedestrians to important destinations including the Civic Center, historic Downtown core, Weston Park, Hemet Stock Farm, future transit center, public parking, and other public facilities.



Gateway monuments can announce entry into the historic Downtown core, improve visual appearance, and create identity.

Figure 7-2: Florida Avenue Before and After



Existing View



Future View

The vision for Florida Avenue is to expand and improve the pedestrian environment and transform the street into one that serves all modes of transportation. Streetscape improvements along Florida Avenue are particularly important to enhance pedestrian activity, reduce the perceived width of the street, and unify the north and south sides of the historic Downtown.

C. Open Space Improvements

The recommended open space improvements are based on the opportunities Downtown Hemet offers to provide a variety of outdoor experiences and settings to serve the community. The recommendations for open space include improvements to existing parks, as well as concepts for new parks and open space areas (Figure 7-1). These include: Weston Park, Civic Plaza, Linear Park, Ramona Loop, and Pocket Parks. In addition, there is opportunity on the privately-owned Hemet Stock Farm site to preserve and enhance historic open space that will serve both the community and visitors as part of the site's redevelopment. The open spaces in Downtown will be connected and systematically appointed and designed to offer the citizens of Hemet diverse opportunities to enjoy outdoor activities.

1. Weston Park

Weston Park is a key component within the Downtown's open space network. The four-acre site is the largest park in the Downtown and has the opportunity to become a multi-generational area with a variety of activities for all ages. Currently, the park is not being used to its potential and attracts unwelcome activity. The new design of Weston Park investigates the current issues of the site and provides solutions.

The concept plan for Weston Park as shown in Figure 7-3 envisions that the park will become a more active environment by creating different areas that will attract diverse users. The center of Weston Park will become a dining pavilion where visitors can grab a quick lunch and enjoy dining underneath a grove of lacy trees. Beneath the pavilion will sit a grassy amphitheater where the pavilion and its dining area become an impromptu stage for community events. The south end of the park will have a variety of senior activities including shuffleboard, pickle ball courts, and a meandering path through a botanical garden. The playground and large grassy mound will embrace adventure play elements and provide seating for onlooking parents. All of the spaces will be connected through a wide loop, creating a walking path that encircles the entire site. The perimeter of the park will be fenced with a visibly open barrier providing the city's security and maintenance staff the opportunity to keep the park clean and safe. Parking will be provided at the perimeter of the park along Thompson Street and Taylor Street.

A detailed design of the park uses and amenities will be developed as part of the Capital Improvement Program to upgrade the park site.

Figure 7-3: Weston Park Concept Plan





Elements and features of the redesigned Weston Park will be multi-generational and will include an amphitheater; outdoor dining area, playground, exercise equipment, game courts, and passive open space areas.

Figure 7-4: Weston Park Bird's Eye Views



Bird's eye view of Weston Park



Bird's eye view of Weston Park amphitheater area

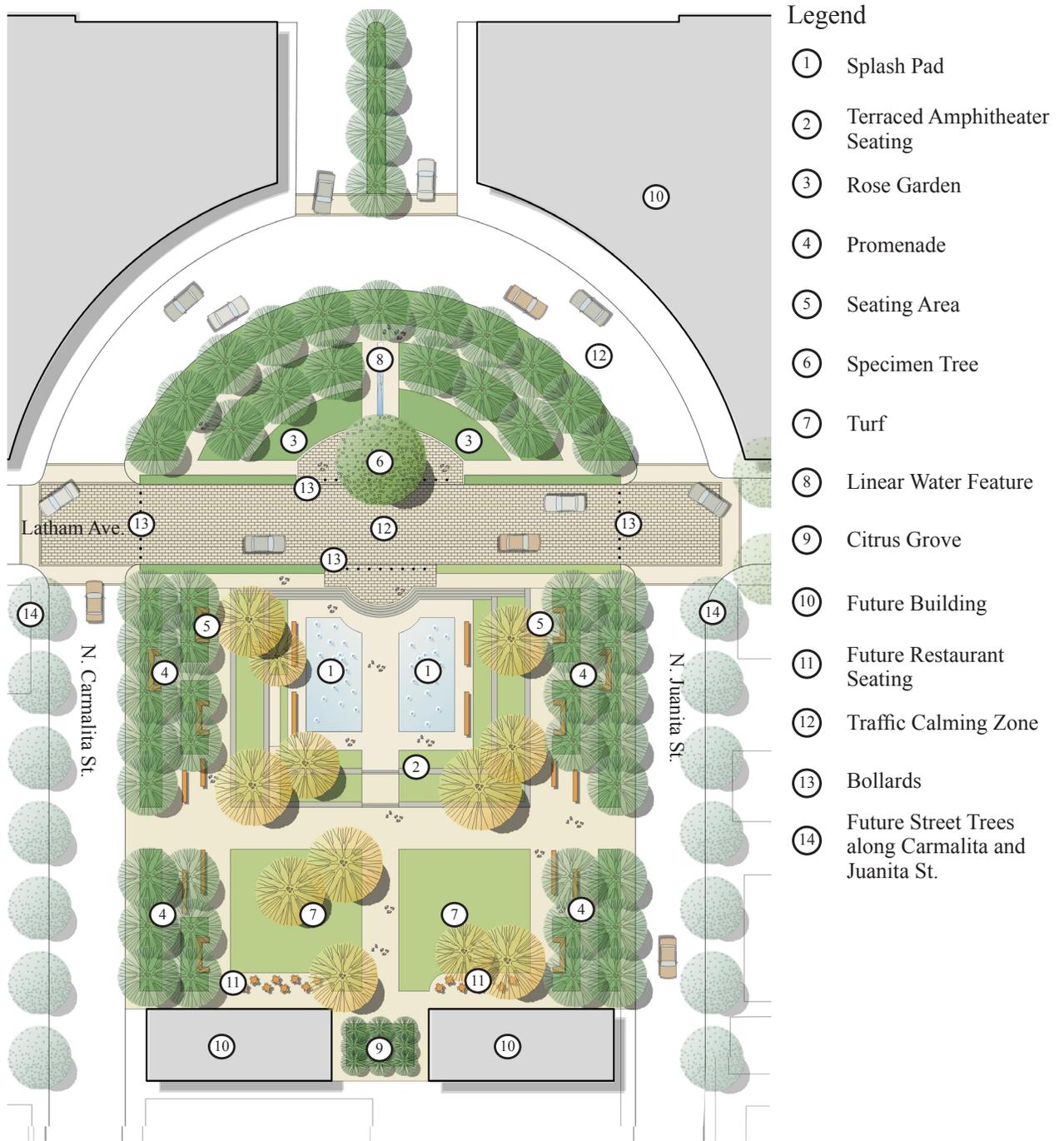
2. Civic Plaza

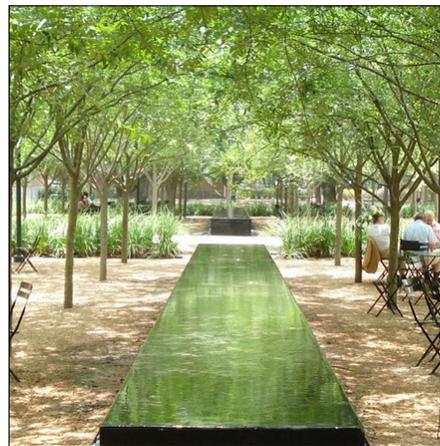
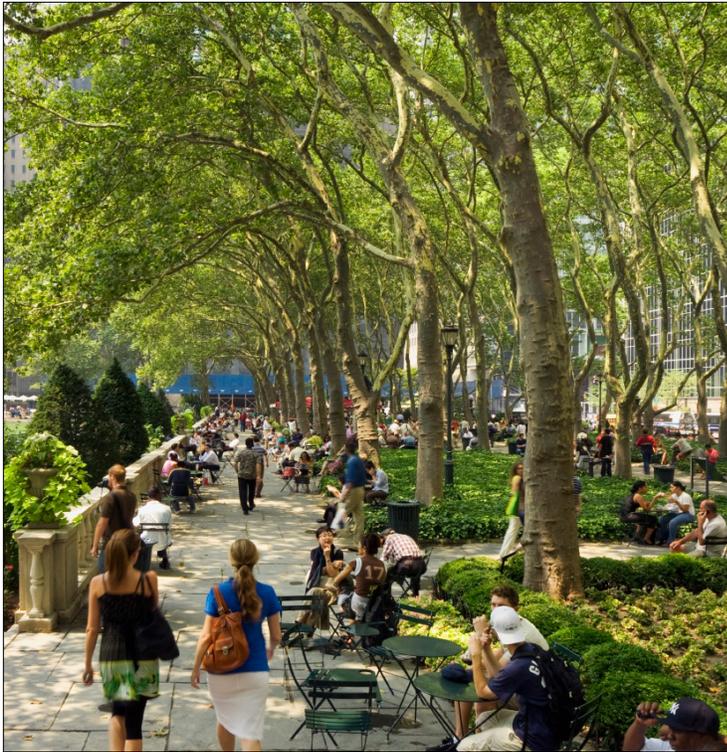
The Specific Plan recommends creating a new civic open space in the form of a plaza on the City-owned land adjacent to the Civic Center, between Carmalita and Juanita Streets. The Civic Plaza will become a “town square” that will host a variety of community events through its active and passive spaces.

The center of the plaza will include a large splash pad shaded by a focal point specimen tree in the background. A terraced lawn will frame the splash pad and provide a variety of seating options for different events. By day, it can function as the neighborhood watering hole, inviting families to bring their children to cool off and play in the pop-jets. By night, the fountains can be turned off to transform the space into a large amphitheater hosting a concert in the park or an evening farmers market. Passive spaces within the plaza, such as a rose garden and promenade, provide users with a place to gather and connect with other community members. The plaza will also be equipped with built-in speakers and electrical needs to make any future community events accessible for a variety of needs.

The design for the Civic Plaza will maintain Latham Avenue intersecting the plaza space and open for vehicular traffic. There will be a traffic calming zone spanning the east-west boundary equipped with removable bollards and raised brick pavers, creating a curb less transition from the south section of the plaza to the north. During events, the bollards on the east-west crosswalks can be used, directing Latham Avenue traffic around the north section of the plaza. During non-event times, the bollards spanning the east-west boundary will remain up, setting a boundary for both pedestrians and cars.

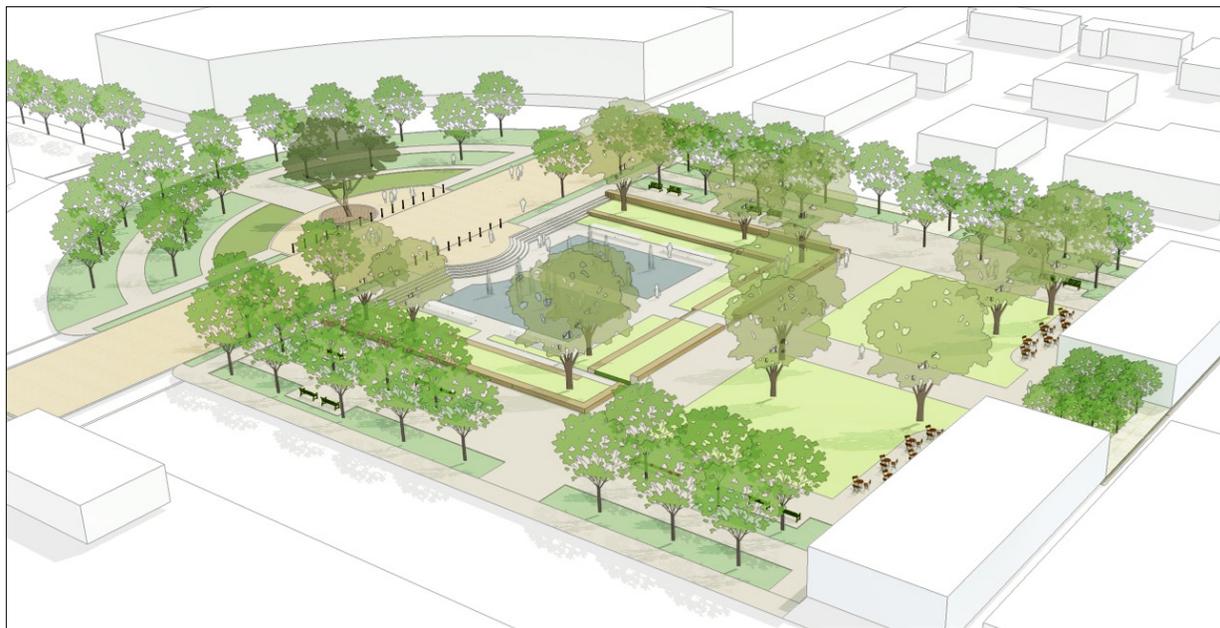
Figure 7-5: Civic Plaza Concept Plan





The new Civic Plaza will enhance the Civic Center and will include terraced amphitheater seating, rose garden, splash pad, water feature, outdoor seating, and passive open space areas.

Figure 7-6: Civic Plaza Bird's Eye Views



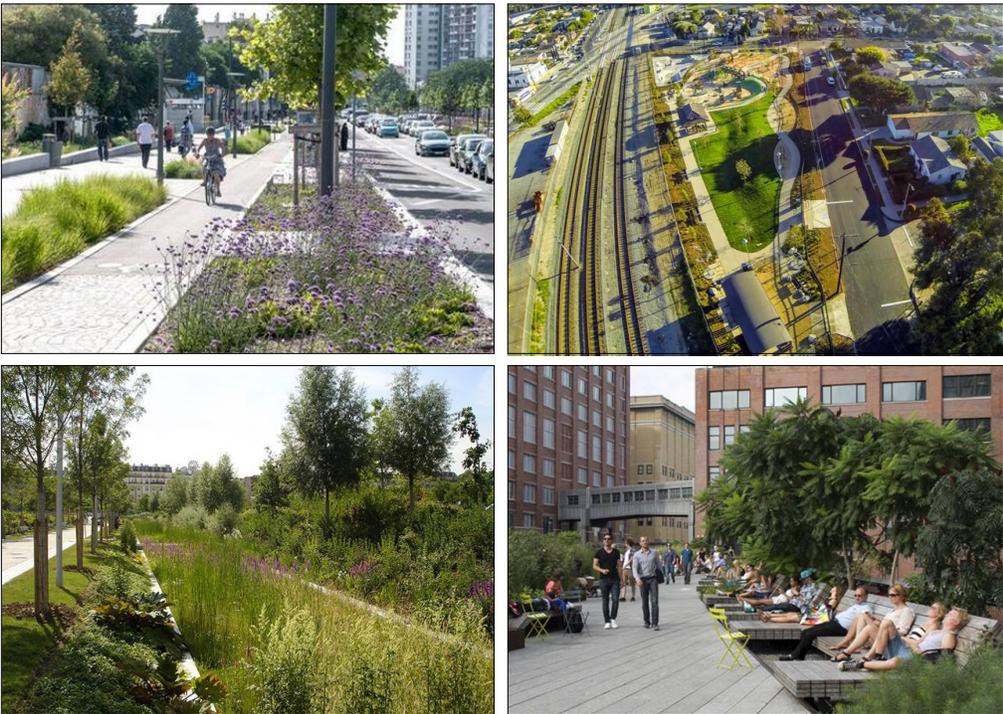
Bird's eye view of Civic Plaza



Bird's eye view of Civic Plaza splash pad

3. Linear Park

A linear park (Figure 7-1) and Class I bicycle path, as described in Chapter 6, are proposed on the City-owned property adjacent to the rail line, connecting the Hemet Museum and the future transit mobility hub. The linear park will be an active thoroughfare enabling the citizens of Hemet to walk and cycle. The path will be designed to separate pedestrians and bicyclists from adjacent traffic. Along the linear park, there are opportunities to create rest stops where users could use outdoor exercise equipment or read an educational sign on Hemet’s history, as well as opportunities to place public art. The linear park is proposed along a segment of the larger Ramona Loop described in the following section.

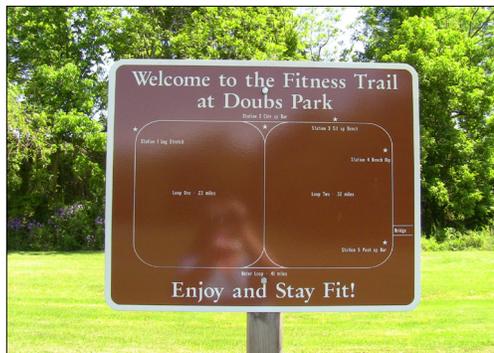


The proposed linear park will be an active pedestrian and bicycle thoroughfare connecting the Hemet Museum (historic Santa Fe Depot) to the future transit mobility hub.

4. Ramona Loop

The proposed Ramona Loop (Figure 7-1) is a one-mile trail that will highlight key features in Downtown Hemet and connect the open spaces to one another. The path/trail can serve as an education tool for local students to learn about the history of their community through interpretive signs and marked plaques. Historical walking tours can be a city-sponsored event that will help nurture civic pride, enabling citizens to learn about the historic elements of their city. The loop can also serve as a designated exercise path with distance markers demarcated through signage or painted concrete.

The proposed Ramona Loop can serve as a designated exercise path and educational trail through Downtown Hemet with distance markers, exercise equipment and interpretive signage about the history of Hemet.



5. Pocket Parks

There are two existing pocket parks on Florida Avenue that are significantly underutilized. Pockets parks can provide small oases in the urban setting of Downtown. Both pocket parks have the potential to enhance the public realm in Downtown in a variety of ways. The first pocket park, located on Carmalita Street and Florida Avenue would benefit from the addition outdoor seating for the adjacent restaurant. The second pocket park, located on Buena Vista Street and Florida Avenue, is currently a passive space that would benefit from an active use, such as a dog park, tot lot, or community garden.

The existing pocket parks in Downtown Hemet could be enhanced with active uses, including outdoor seating, community garden, and public art that engages the community.



6. Hemet Stock Farm

The Hemet Stock Farm is currently a privately owned 36-acre site that is listed on state and local historic inventories. A cottage originally built in 1888 as a bunkhouse is located on the property along with a half-mile race track, grandstand, historic entrance drive and original farm structures. The site provides both historic character and adaptive reuse potential, and creating public open space should be a component of the site's redevelopment. New development should preserve its historic traits and provide a unique open space area that could be used for both community events and as a tourist destination.



The historic Hemet Stock Farm has cultural significance to community. Adaptive reuse of the site provides opportunity to create an open space area that could used for community events and as a tourist destination.

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